

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Previously Presented) A return device for containers, such as bottles, cups, cans, or the like, comprising: an insertion opening for receiving the container and at least one distributing means for transporting the container from said insertion opening to a selectable processing means of said return device, said distributing means comprising at least one intermediate bottom and a receiving means both rotatably supported about a shaft, wherein said receiving means is rotated to transport the container away from said insertion opening and said intermediate bottom is rotated to position a sorting opening of the intermediate bottom relative to a bottom opening of said receiving means for passing said container through the sorting opening and the bottom opening to a selected processing means.

2. (Previously Presented) The return device according to claim 1, wherein said return device has arranged therein a support plate which comprises a number of passage holes, each passage hole communicating with at least one processing means, and relative to which said intermediate bottom is movable for arranging said sorting opening between the bottom opening and a selected passage hole.

3. (Previously Presented) The return device according to claim 1, wherein said receiving means comprises a shell including an open side which can be moved to provide said insertion opening.

4. (Previously Presented) The return device according to claim 1, wherein said intermediate bottom is circular and rotatable about its center axis.

5. (Previously Presented) The return device according to claim 1, wherein said sorting opening is designed as a radially outwardly open peripheral recess.

6. (Previously Presented) The return device according to claim 1, including a shell which is rotatably supported in coaxial fashion relative to said center axis.

7. (Previously Presented) The return device according to claim 1, wherein a bearing shaft extends substantially in a vertical direction from said support plate and has rotatably supported thereon a shell and/or said intermediate bottom.

8. (Previously Presented) The return device according to claim 7, wherein said bearing shaft is a hollow shaft.

9. (Previously Presented) The return device according to claim 1, wherein passage holes are arranged along a circle in concentric fashion relative to said intermediate bottom.

10. (Previously Presented) The return device according to claim 1, comprising passage holes, wherein a guide extends from each passage hole to a corresponding processing means.

11. (Previously Presented) The return device according to claim 1, including at least one identifying means arranged with respect to at least one of said insertion opening, said receiving means, said support plate, and said intermediate bottom for identifying at least one characteristic feature of said container.

12. (Previously Presented) The return device according to claim 11, wherein the characteristic feature of said container is the geometrical shape thereof.

13. (Previously Presented) The return device according to claim 11, wherein a storage and/or evaluation means is connected to said identifying means for storing different geometrical shapes of said container and for comparing a container to be recognized with a stored shape.

14. (Previously Presented) The return device according to claim 11, wherein said identifying means is designed as a scanning means and is movable relative to a container to be scanned.

15. (Previously Presented) The return device according to claim 1, wherein said intermediate bottom comprises a rotational sleeve which is rotatably attached to a bearing shaft of said support plate.

16. (Previously Presented) The return device according to claim 1, wherein a shell is connected to a bearing sleeve by a radial arm which is rotatably attached to a rotational sleeve.

17. (Previously Presented) The return device according to claim 1, wherein a rotational sleeve of said intermediate bottom is rotatably supported in a hollow shaft of said support plate and a bearing shaft of said receiving means is rotatably supported in said rotational sleeve.

18. (Previously Presented) The return device according to claim 1, wherein a shell of said receiving means and said intermediate bottom are rotatable according to signals of identifying means for identifying at least one characteristic feature of said container.

19. (Previously Presented) The return device according to claim 1, wherein said intermediate bottom is sector-like.